



GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

JANUARY 2014 VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1

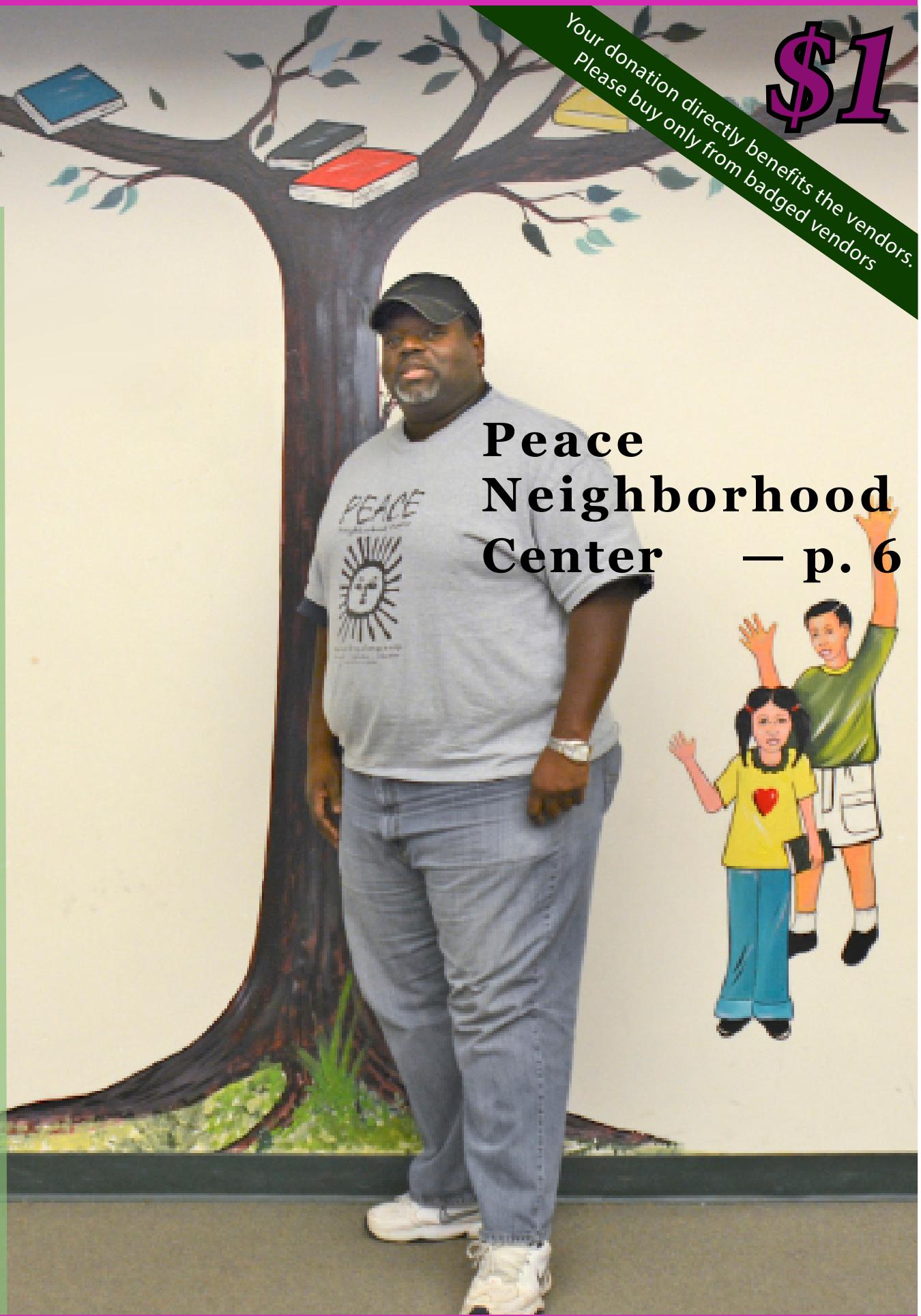
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Ridding my prejudices is harder than finding low-income housing



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

The conversations never cease to surprise me, which demonstrates how deeply ingrained my prejudices are. After all, I work with housing-insecure people nearly every day and know that many are educated and highly intelligent.

This was my third year as a driver and overnight host at the Rotating Shelter, a program in which area congregations host up to 25 unhoused men for a week or two at a time. Due to my experiences in previous years, the men's efficiency and graciousness in unloading and setting up their mattresses and bedding for the week, their consideration in looking out for one another, their

GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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kindness to each other and all of us, and their good manners and general friendliness – atop weariness for some – seemed routine.

The next morning was not. The morning discussion of books piqued my interest. They discussed books one of the men had picked up for a young man notorious for reading as he panhandled, and opined on whether or not the selections matched his taste in books. The books the man had picked up for himself included *The Scarlet Letter* and several other classics.

Driving my first passengers to the St. Andrew's Breakfast Program, the men discussed job applications and how area employers recognized the post office box and phone number at the Delonis Center, as well as its address. Some

tried to hide their homelessness to avoid the discrimination rampant among area businesses. Another asserted that as long as you were completely forthcoming about your situation, there were employers like

Zingerman's that would give you a chance and really take care of you if you did a good job. This conversation was not too unusual.

But my second group of passengers first joked about needing to catch a 10 a.m. jet to Geneva to work on the Hadron Collider or a plane to New York City to address the United Nations. Then they launched into a discussion of preognition and whether it was the subconscious revealing what was preordained, or if it could be explained by the theory of relativity – that everything that has ever occurred or will is always happening. They cited various laws of physics and thermodynamics, such as the conservation of energy, and their applicability to *déjà vu*.

I found my mind meandering to my thinking – these are intelligent and educated men with social skills. Why don't they have jobs and housing?

Snippets of other morning conversations drifted into my consciousness in

response. One man who has been working steadily, still in the program because he and his fiancée have been unable to find an affordable apartment. The income of another going to child support. Another embroiled in a time-consuming fight to gain custody of his children. Yet another leaving a good job so that the taint of a personal vendetta would not spill over onto a good employer.

None of this should surprise me, nor does it when I consciously think about it. But just under the surface of my consciousness lurk the stereotypes cultivated by years of comments, media portrayals and the American work ethic corollary that, if you are poor, it is because you are lazy or deficient.

I wish I could "resolve away" my stereotypes, but the closest resolution I can make is to be alert for the appearance of all my prejudices and challenge them with reality, until a new, more balanced paradigm takes hold in my mind.

Madiba and everyone loves Raymond



the memorial. Raymond was a life-long mentor of Taylor.

Taylor remarked that Raymond helped a lot of people in his life, though he knew that some were taking advantage of him. Even when people phoned at night asking for help, Raymond would say, "Stop by tomorrow and I'll see what I can do."

It was mentioned that Raymond spoke up when he thought something was wrong – that he was always a little bit in-your-face, but in a good-humored way.

Raymond's wide smile and engaging personality helped him get to know the people he encountered. A statement from Mark Creekmore, president of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Washtenaw County, paints an accurate portrait of Raymond in action:

I can remember meeting Raymond before I ever got



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Raymond Pierce

While the world mourned the passing and celebrated the life of South African leader Nelson Mandela (who was affectionately called "Madiba"), a memorial commemorating the life of Raymond Pierce was held at St. Mary's Student Parish in Ann Arbor. Raymond, also an exceptionally loving and righteous person, was a familiar figure in downtown Ann Arbor, passing afternoons at Starbucks and motoring down the street in his wheelchair to community meals.

Raymond passed away at the University of Michigan hospital on November 22, 2013, from health complications. Father Dan Riem, presiding at the service, remarked that Raymond was a faithful member of the parish with a designated front row seat.

"Raymond had a smile worth a million dollars," said Martin Taylor, a eulogist at

the memorial. Raymond was a life-long mentor of Taylor.

Raymond's wide smile and engaging personality helped him get to know the people he encountered. A statement from Mark Creekmore, president of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Washtenaw County, paints an accurate portrait of Raymond in action:

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Raymond before I ever got

Landmarks in our lives – upon whom do you depend?



by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell

When I was a hospice chaplain, my census was primarily in Saint Louis neighborhoods quite close to downtown. In certain seasons I also had patients and families miles out in the country beyond suburban sprawl.

Hospice team members always held their collective breath when rural directions were given that included a pink mailbox or a certain tree. Inevitably, weather or time had altered landmarks that people thought were still there or clearly visible.

Landmarks disappear regularly where I live now. Summer corn at full height

As I was figuring out where everyone

Victim-offender conferencing introduced to Washtenaw County

by Gertrude Warkentin
Groundcover Contributor

Victim-offender conferencing (VOC) is based on the principles of restorative justice that Susan Beckett wrote about in the September, 2013 issue of Groundcover. I was reminded of a restorative experience related to me by my sister, Marie. It is essentially an example of VOC.

My brother-in-law, Brad, gets a call from the school principal, who asks him to come pick up his 10-year-old daughter Barbara who has sustained an injury in school. Brad takes Barbara to the emergency room, where she gets a few stitches in her arm.

Meanwhile, my sister, Marie, gets a call from the principal telling her that a boy, Peter, threw the rock that hit and injured Barbara. He tells her to expect Peter to show up at the house to apologize. Peter's mother has also heard from the principal and also calls Marie. She says that Peter's father is on an extended business trip and Peter has started throwing stones and is not minding her, and she asks that Marie be sure to keep him there until Brad gets home. Maybe hearing from Brad will make more of an impact on Peter.

Peter is the first to arrive. Marie takes him to Brad's study and asks him to wait there until Barbara and Brad get home. Peter begins to cry. He says he did not mean to hurt Barbara. He meant to kill Gordon, Barbara's older brother.

Brad and Barbara arrive next, and Peter makes his apology to Barbara. Brad remains in the study with Peter and learns that Peter is angry with Gordon.



Ex-prosecutor Fred Van Liew related his victim-offender conferencing experiences to a full house on November 11, 2013.

Peter and family have recently moved into town from Australia, and Gordon constantly mimics Peter's accent and the other boys laugh.

Gordon arrives home from school, and Brad calls him in to hear from Peter what it has felt like having Gordon mimic him. The two boys end up making an agreement. Gordon will stop mimicking Peter. Peter will stop throwing stones. And so it was.

In this example, it is not clear whether the victim, Barbara, told Peter anything about her experience. Giving the victim an opportunity to speak directly to the offender to tell of the impact of the injurious act on her life is a central part

lived, I learned that one of the daughters and her family were at home in a farmhouse about a mile from me, right where a main road and a much less traveled road crossed. I smiled and told them, "That's my landmark. Whenever I come home at night north or southbound on that main road, I train my eyes to pick up the small green reflective road sign that indicates where the cross road lies and I hope that the windows in that house are lit. If they are full of light, it is much easier for me to accurately turn right or left." At the funeral home, I was so pleased to meet the people who live in my landmark and help me get home at night.

Ram Dass has a wonderful line: "We're all just walking each other home."

His walking-each-other-home observation tugs at us to consider being reliable with one another. It indicates

the potential impact we have on others, especially many unnamed others. In a physical sense, my neighbors, whom I now know, have been repeatedly instrumental in my safe trip home. Their house has come to remind me of all the people we depend upon, particularly unknown ones. Gifts given, direction indicated, time made available, space opened up in traffic or the checkout line, thoughtfulness about the consequences of an action taken or a thought expressed, decisions to volunteer, small kindnesses and courtesies overseen – each of these often shift the course of someone's day or days. Early in 2014, the choice to be mindful of unknown, unnamed ones who depend upon us and whose reliance we depend upon is a sturdy, life-remembering choice to make. I pick that choice. What about you?

restoring an offender to the community while holding him or her accountable has a long history in Native American communities in this country.

A group from the Shalom Community Church began to explore how best to introduce a VOC program into this county. The group was joined by the Social Justice Council of the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, the Healing Communities, and Challenging Racism, as well as the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ) in sponsoring a community forum. The community forum was held on November 11, and was well-attended and well-received. The speaker, Fred Van Liew, an ex-prosecutor, stated that his experience led him to conclude that, "we can do much better when it comes to how we respond to crimes and those who commit them." Consequently, he began to introduce restorative approaches and can now speak from years of experience.

In

the example above, it became clear that the offender, Peter, was also a victim, and he did have an opportunity to speak directly to Gordon about how Gordon's behavior affected him. In VOC, rather than focusing on what punishment is deserved, the focus is on how the offender can be held directly accountable so that, in the end, he can take actions that help to restore him to the community with some level of self-respect rather than to be alienated and stigmatized. He is then less likely to offend in the future, which leads directly to another benefit of VOC: a safer community.

A follow-up meeting for people who had expressed an interest in seeing a VOC program come to fruition in Washtenaw County, was held on December 2. A number of the attendees expressed an interest in being trained as facilitators. Others were added to the Shalom group to form a larger steering or planning committee to coordinate future efforts.

Please contact us at voc4change@gmail.com or (734) 905-7148 if you have questions or wish to get involved.

By the way, Gordon and Peter are still good friends. Gordon's eldest son, Peter, got married last fall.

Gratitude in the new year

by Miriam Lindsay
Groundcover Vendor

Hello and salutations from the ground up to all the families, friends, and people of Ann Arbor and all over the Washtenaw County area. I pray that you all were blessed with a Merry Christmas in 2013. Thanks to all of you who gave donations over the year to Groundcover News to help the homeless.

This is now a brand-new year, 2014. Happy New Year, everybody, and may we be blessed with many more years to come. I cannot say to all the people enough how grateful I am for the hope I have received from the donations given from all of your hearts. Because of all you, our newspaper is four years old and Groundcover News is still helping homeless people become home-full.

I am Vendor #6, Miriam Lindsey. I was living in the Delonis shelter when the publisher of Groundcover Susan Beckett, visited us to talk about the idea; Groundcover was not yet a newspaper. Susan's idea became a reality, and I moved out of the shelter into my own apartment.

I have seizures, I am legally blind, and I am with little formal education. No, I don't feel sorry for myself – I feel very grateful; your help and donations to me have been a hand up in my life, not a handout. Groundcover has grown and helped many others, all because of all your donations. I am able to rest assured that I am not living on the street but in my apartment.

Happy New Year to all of our Groundcover friends!

Eddy shows his colors Galens Tag Day

I am a first-year medical student at U-M this year, and I participated in the annual Galens Tag Days fundraiser this past weekend (December 5-7). Saturday afternoon, I was stationed at the corner of Washington St. and 4th Ave., where I met one of your vendors, Eddy. He was extremely pleasant and I had a great time chatting with him over the course of my shift. He even helped promote my own cause and shared some of his earnings with me. I'm very thankful to have met him, and you should be very proud to have him in your service.

Best wishes,
Alexander Harris



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Your mindset is your world

by James Manning
Groundcover Vendor

As we journey through our lives, we are met with many challenges, opportunities, joys, pains, friends, enemies, and everything else that could happen under the sun that impacts our world view. It seems to be in our nature to come to the conclusion that we must change the world to meet our satisfaction. However, when you think about it, is changing the entire world and, by extension, humanity itself, even a possible task? Of course not, and it would be ludicrous to think it could ever be done. Our life is totally what we make of it. It's up to us if we choose to live in paradise or in hell. The crucial point depends on how we look at life and ourselves.

I generally suffer from depression, which isn't hard to imagine for a homeless individual. It took me a very long time to realize that I could manage my feelings better than any medication or therapy ever could. About one year ago, I made a decision to let go of the hate and bitterness that held my impression of the world around me. I simply just started looking at things from a more positive perspective. All good things came to be blessings, while setbacks were helping to make myself a better, stronger person. The result left me a happier person who was no longer wishing for the collapse of mankind.

Has this new state of mind made my outward life itself better? Of course not. It only changed my daily emotions and my tolerance for what I used to consider intolerable. I think anyone can make this shift and benefit from it. Sadly, we practically swim in negativity on a daily basis and I find it very important not to allow whatever assails you to ultimately rule you. Negativity is a spiraling pit with no bottom and it is not very hard to lose yourself in. Therefore, be glad things aren't a hundred times worse, be-

Groundcover vendors train as HIV educators

This fall, a group of Groundcover vendors accepted the invitation from students at the University of Michigan to become certified HIV educators. Two of them, James Woods and Michael Ware, attended every session and successfully completed the course. They received certificates from U-M at a graduation ceremony and banquet honoring the graduates and their student-group instructors.

This project of the class Pedagogy of Empowerment: Activism in Race, Gender, and Health, taught by Dr. Nessa Haniff, a long-time lecturer and HIV/AIDS advocate at U-M, is an innova-

cause they certainly could be. Even that simple reminder might just make your day seem brighter. Self-improvement will always yield more positive results than struggling for improved circumstances.

As a vendor for Groundcover, I have been given some rather nasty opinions from some people. Where I used to react with anger, I now experience compassion. "That person must be so unhappy," I think to myself. The sad truth is that it really is lonely at the top. It's impossible to have everything you want because there is always something more to want. We race each other in acts of non-stop consumerism, only to feel unfulfilled afterwards. This is one of the reasons why Americans are some of the unhappiest people on earth. Unfortunately, a good deal of people prefer ignorance to facing this fact.

Whatever happens in the world around you and how you are treated still cannot rob you of the choice you're given about how to respond. That is left entirely in your hands. In my case, this new point of view was something I really needed. It's just a shame it took me so long to see it this way.

I can't help but also bring up the fact that this has also had an impact on my physical well-being. I have way more energy in the mornings these days. I also don't feel so weighed-down throughout the day. Plus, I feel more alert and aware of what's going on around me since I'm not buried in narcissistic thoughts of all that's wrong in my life. This article is just my opinion of how changing my point of view has played out. I don't believe in forcing ideologies onto anyone. Everyone has the right to do as they wish, so long such actions remain victimless. Free will is the greatest gift that makes all this possible. The world may never, ever be perfect, but thankfully it can be bearable.

tive way to move knowledge from the university to the community. Each of the graduates will find venues within their own communities where they can disperse information about how AIDS is contracted, along with options for testing and treatment. The module allows the students to become the teachers, making the knowledge accessible for all participants.

If you are interested in learning the module, please stay tuned for a workshop led by our Groundcover vendors, James Woods and Michael Ware.

Majority rules – or does it? (Part One)

by Martin Stolzenberg
Groundcover Contributor

Complaining individuals will sometimes lament things like, "My freedoms are being trashed." Next comes some trite moan like, "They're making me separate trash from recyclables" or, "They search me every time I go to the airport." These are small potatoes and these safeguards usually benefit the general public. But, sometimes there is something so egregious that it cries out for us to do something about it.

Majority rule is embedded in our collective psyche as part of "The American Way." After all, in a democratic society, "[t]he purpose of elections is to translate public opinion into public policy as accurately as possible," as the website michiganredistricting.org puts it.

Sorrowfully, it doesn't work out that way all the time. It's surprising how this simple proposition gets twisted out of shape and how dismal are the results that ensue. We have just witnessed how a small group within Congress almost took the country into default on our national debt. If this miserable action had succeeded, major economists almost universally predict that it would have thrown our whole economic system into turmoil, adversely impacting the wellness of our country.

So how did we get to this impasse?

Say hello to *gerrymandering*. Those creating this outlandish situation mostly come from Congressional districts that have been so warped in their configuration that their representatives are

in no danger of being ousted in truly competitive elections. These extremists can serve with impunity knowing that their perverse actions are immune to votes from a representative electorate. Phil Power, in a recent October 2013 column in *Bridge Magazine*, said, "The only good thing emerging from the recent mess in Washington is a new realization of, and focus on, the malign influence of gerrymandering on American politics."

Just what is gerrymandering?

It means attempts to achieve a political advantage over the opponent party by manipulating voting district boundaries to create a partisan advantage in the outcome of an election. When one party is gaining such an advantage, the act is called gerrymandering.

What are its origins?

Gerrymandering has been



partly because of the growth of primaries. Simply put: it is cheating.

Why is gerrymandering more of a problem now than ever before?

Here in the United States, in a 1970s movement to become more democratic, both major parties moved away from candidates nominated by a "political boss" to what seemed a more equitable approach. The voters in each state primary district would select the candidate of their choice to be voted for at the party's nominating convention. This admirable reform, in many cases, hasn't worked as intended. That is because only the most partisan party members tend to vote in primaries – generally only 15-20 percent of the registered electorate. When the regular election occurs, more moderates come out to vote, but they are left with the choice of voting for some extremist kook in their own party or crossing over party lines.

Under these conditions – sometimes the kook wins. So while gerrymandering is not new, when coupled with the more recent partisan nominations, a lousy alliance has been created, one that has energized disproportionate representation in Congress and in state

legislatures.

How did these people achieve this power?

House members serve a two-year term. The number of Congressional districts in each state is predetermined, based on the latest U.S. Census, which occurs every 10 years. If the census shows that a state has grown or contracted in population, the number of its representatives might change. Michigan has the dubious honor of being the only state that had a declining population in the 2010 Census compared to 2000, so we lost one representative to Congress and our districts needed to be redrawn, dividing our population into 14 equal parts instead of 15.

Every 10 years, determining the borders of the voting districts affords the majority party in the state legislature great latitude in how they draw their districts. This increasingly leads to gerrymandering their state, as they cluster supporters to maximize their electoral victories. The result can be seen in the makeup of Congress. In the 2012 election, Democratic Congressional candidates received 51 percent of the popular vote and Republican candidates only received 49 percent. That was plus-1.4 million votes for the Democratic House candidates. Yet when we look at the current makeup of the House, 54 percent of the members are Republicans and 46 percent are Democrats. There are 231 Republicans, 200 Democrats and four vacancies. So we have a House controlled by Republicans who got fewer votes in the Congressional elections than their rivals. This anomaly is partially attributable to gerrymandering.

While gerrymandering benefits the Republican Party more in the House of Representatives, it is not because the Democrats are so noble. It just happens

see MAJORITY RULES, page 11

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AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Peace Neighborhood Center: making our community better

by Leonore Gerstein
Groundcover Contributor

Before we get into the meat of this profile, let me take a minute to say "Hats off!" to the talented staff of this Peace Neighborhood for picking creative and inspiring names and acronyms for its diverse services. I especially like REACH (Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Community and Hope), the name of the after-school program for kids K-5th grades; Rising Sons for adolescent boys; and STARS (Sisters Together Achieving Real Success) for adolescent girls. Of course, at Peace Neighborhood Center, every teenager can be a Rising Star by joining Leadership Development Camp in the summer (and meet the mayor of Ann Arbor, among other inspiring people), while his or her younger siblings join the ranks of Youth on the Move.

"Our Peaceful Mission," posted on the Great Room wall at headquarters, translates the Center's values into personal goals for kids and adults alike. It ends with the eloquent statement, *"These are the promises I make to myself because I create my present and my future."* What a beautiful pledge.



Bonnie Billups became Executive Director of Peace Neighborhood Center in 2006. Billups began his career at the center in 1976.

The Peace Neighborhood Center (or simply, "Peace") began as a search for understanding among mutually suspicious residents from the opposite sides of the economic divide. The crisis arose some four decades ago, when several public housing sites were built in already-established neighborhoods.

Misunderstandings and tension led people of good will to get together to resolve the adjustment difficulties. Out of these conversations became an actual community center. The original building was donated by the Lutheran Church.

More recently, the structure was expanded with a design suited to

the organization's mission, to provide "programs for children, families, and individuals to promote self-sufficiency and positive community involvement." The Great Room has multiple functions; there's a full kitchen, and there are smaller rooms for tutoring, small group meetings, and administration. Outside there's a playground within a large open space, and the Peace bus and vans sit in the parking area between runs to and from numerous schools and housing sites.

Under the enduring influence of its founding executive director Rose Martin, Peace programs grow out of the specific needs of the families and individuals it serves. No service is an application of a blueprint or recipe. Current Executive Director Bonnie Billups, Jr. credits Martin with teaching him that approach and preparing him for leadership. When they first met, he was 10 years old, and soon thereafter, Rose appointed him to be her assistant in the "Operation Education" project. Similarly, Director of Programming Paul Johnson came into the Peace "family" as a child of 10, grew up there prior to college, and returned later as a staff member. Not incidentally, both gentlemen bring their dogs to work. It makes the place feel homey. And, more importantly, according to Johnson, in difficult moments a dog is often therapeutic for a young person.

The center serves socially and economically disadvantaged families and individuals. Currently, there are nine programs for youth and seven for adults. Many of the services were designed and piloted at Peace. When asked by other agencies to help them get similar projects off the ground, Billups tells them they need to find their own way. He knows that he cannot package the spirit that Peace infuses in everything it undertakes, a spirit of love and respect

see PEACE, page 10



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MAKING CHANGE

Students recover U-M cafeteria food for community meals

by Daniel Grill
Groundcover Contributor

For many members of the University of Michigan (U-M) community, hunger is a distant issue. While it certainly has an active campus, the vast majority of the billions of dollars the university brings in is dedicated to maintaining a beautiful campus, cutting-edge research, and top-notch athletics. However, just a few steps from campus, more basic needs prevail. In Washtenaw County, one in every seven people suffers from food insecurity. This translates into 46,500 individuals in our immediate vicinity lacking access to sufficient food for a healthy lifestyle. They must skip meals or look for alternative ways to get food.

U-M students Dana Delvecchio and Hannah Gingerich have found a way to bridge the gap between the wealth of the University and need of the surrounding community. University dining halls are charged with the daunting task of feeding tens of thousands of students and staff on a daily basis. This requires tons of food, and unfortunately, after meal times, much of the excess food is thrown out. While certainly the easiest solution for university employees, this food is still viable to feed many outside of the University.



Hannah Gingerich (left) and Colleen Rathz collect leftover food from University of Michigan dormitories as part of the Food Recovery Network. Photo by Christine Hoffman.

Once the university approved their request to start the club, the Food Recovery Network gained representation at events like Festifall, a showcase of the different campus organizations. This helped the group garner the attention of 200 students who signed up to be on their email list. While this was a great start, the first few months were quite the learning experience. Gingerich, the

current president of the group, claims that the "the University was initially cautious due to health and safety concerns."

Before starting the operation, precautions had to be agreed on by the university administration. First, only food that was served by trained dining hall employees could be recovered. This meant that self-serve options would still be thrown out due to contamination concerns. Additionally, the food that was taken had to be recorded and kept at established temperatures using coolers. Finally, students had to be trained in the proper protocol for packing and transporting food – once again, for contamination concerns.

This process may seem convoluted, but it was made a lot easier by the support of the university. The administration

was forthcoming in offering training and funding for the group. Once the administrative work was done, the Food Recovery Network operation really got rolling.

Beginning in February of last year, two or three volunteers spent two hours

see FOOD, page 10

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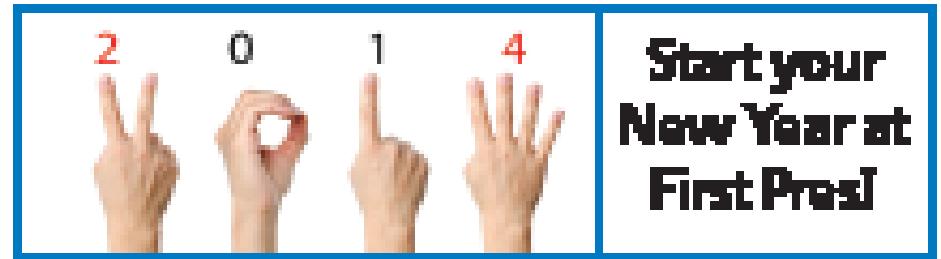


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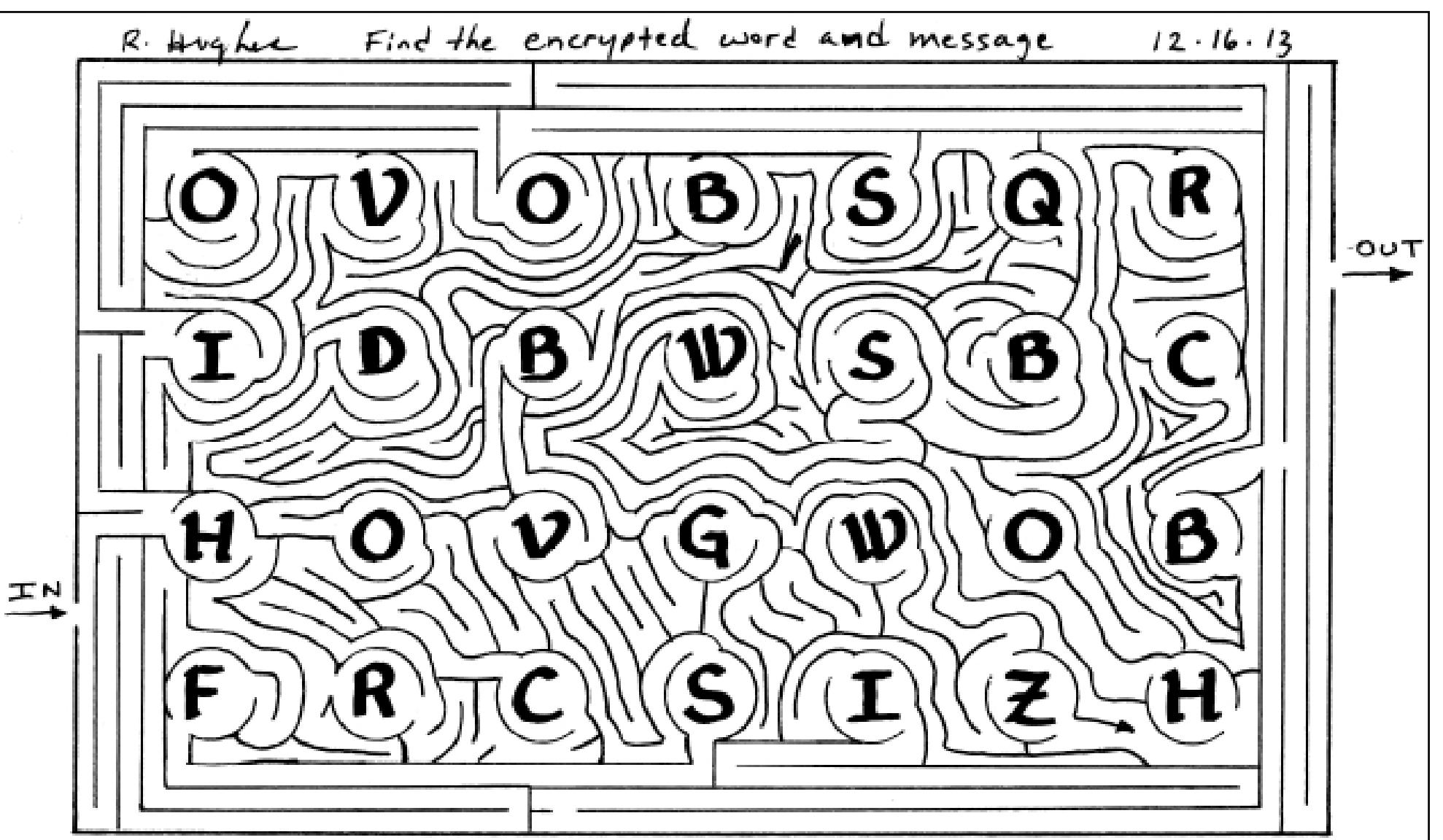
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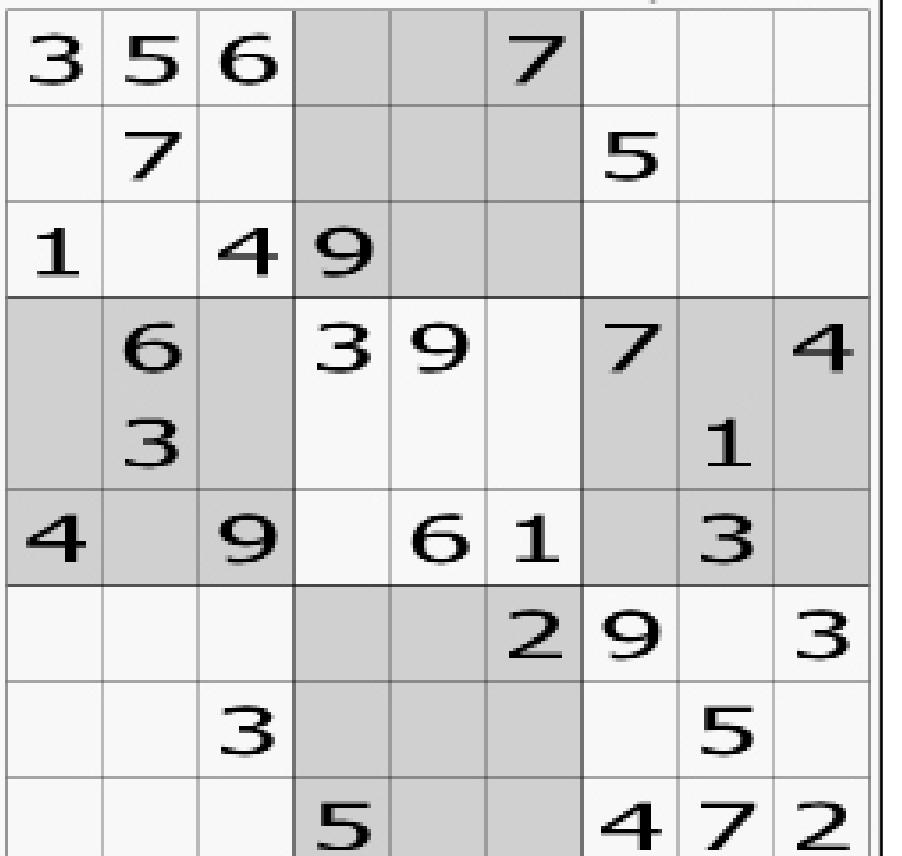
The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1. I agree not to ask for more than a dollar or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcov-
- er News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell;" threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to: contact@groundcovernews.com 734-972-0926

Sudoku 4puz.com



Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3x3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 8 – Groundcover Volunteer Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m. Bethlehem United Church of Christ, Gallery Room (elevator to B), 423 S. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor. More info: contact@groundcovernews.com, or call (734) 972-0926.

January 10 – Growing Hope Monthly Community Potluck and Sustainability Film Series, 6-9 p.m. Screening of 2011 documentary *No Impact Man* immediately following potluck (roughly 7 p.m.). Please bring a dish to pass, and RSVP. Ypsilanti Public Library Downtown Branch, 922 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: erin@growing-hope.net, (734) 786-8401.

January 13-28 – MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL WEEK. Community events throughout Washtenaw County include lectures, book groups, art exhibits, live music. See below for highlights; for complete listing of events, visit mlksymposium.umich.edu (U-M/Ann Arbor) or www.emich.edu/mlk/schedule.php (EMU/Ypsilanti).

Key MLK Events

University of Michigan

1/13 – Performance: "What does it mean to work in a system that fails you and your kids? A beginning teacher's journey through the Chicago Public Schools," 4-5:30 p.m.

Ethnographic performance uses data from four narrative interviews with a first-year teacher in the Chicago Public Schools to raise questions about urban education and teachers' struggles in high-poverty schools. Group discussions before and after the performance. Weill Hall, Annenberg Auditorium, 735 S. State St., Ann Arbor.

1/14 – Forum: "The Power of Protest: Black Student Activism at the University of Michigan," 4-6 p.m. Experts discuss the history of Black student activism at U-M from the 1968 forum following Dr. King, Jr.'s assassination to the recent #BBUM movement. 5511 Haven Hall, DAAS Lemuel Johnson Center, 505 S. State St., Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Discussion: "Your Role in Social Change," 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Small group discussions immediately following keynote lecture, giving participants the opportunity to reflect on what roles we can play in social change. Refreshments provided. Michigan League, Koessler Room, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Lecture: "From Martin Luther King to Tupac Shakur: Implications of Hip Hop for Graduate Education, Pedagogy, and Engaged Scholarship," 4-6 p.m. Professor Derrick P. Alridge explores ways of infusing hip hop into the classroom and the scholarship of graduate students as a means of devel-

oping justice-oriented citizens. Rackham Amphitheater, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor.

1/15 – Lecture: "Can Urban Planning Build Agency in Marginalized Communities?" 7-9 p.m. Speaker Charles Anderson, President and CEO of the Urban League of Detroit, asks, *What should planning look like in the future? Can planning help realize King's vision of a more just America?* Michigan Union, Pendleton Room, 530 S. State St., Ann Arbor.

1/20 – 16th Annual MLK Children and Youth Program, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. K-12 students from school communities throughout southeastern Michigan participate in storytelling, guided discussions and group projects, skits, rap poetry, and a range of musical performances. Modern Languages Building, 812 E. Washington, Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Exhibit: Black History Mobile Museum 101 – "The Peacemaker," 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Celebrating the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, 150-piece exhibit highlights the 15 Black people who have received this prestigious award.

Michigan Union, Art Lounge, 530 S. State St., Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Keynote Memorial Lecture: Harry Belafonte, 10-11:30 a.m. Belafonte is well-known for his social activism and musical talent. He was the first black producer in television, spearheaded the 1985 "We Are the World" project, served as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, and has been the recipient of many prestigious awards, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Peace Prize and the Nelson Mandela Courage Award. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University, Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Michigan Community Scholars Circle of Unity, 2-3 p.m. Join in song with hundreds on the Diag for the 8th annual "Circle of Unity" with U-M alum and Ann Arbor family favorite, Joe Reilly, and Detroit folk and civil rights singer, Julie Beutel, who will lead songs about civil rights, peace, Native Americans and Songs of Community. Michigan Diag, State and S. University, Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Discussion: "Your Role in Social Change," 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Small group discussions immediately following keynote lecture, giving participants the opportunity to reflect on what roles we can play in social change. Refreshments provided. Michigan League, Koessler Room, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Panel Discussion: "Healing One Story at a Time: Digital Storytelling and Indigenous Intersectionality," 4-6 p.m. A panel of Native American professors, students, and community leaders discuss the impact of traditional storytelling in Indian Country and how storytelling has shaped their own lives. School of Social Work, ECC 1840, 1080 S. University, Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Art Expression & Poetry Slam: "A Tribute to the Reverend Dr.

Strolling reception following lecture. Towsley Center, Dow Auditorium, 1515 E. Medical Drive, Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Convocation/Lecture: "Raising the Bar," 1-3 p.m. Author and motivational speaker Albert Mensah, known as the Ambassador of Opportunity, tells his personal story of overcoming adversity. Rackham Auditorium, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Panel Discussion: "Grief and the Healing Process," 1-3 p.m. Phillip Sample and Billy Wilder, two formerly incarcerated individuals, grieve over the crimes they committed; Tammi Smith and Gary Weinstein, who have both lost family members to violent crimes, have each reached out to the perpetrators as part of their healing process.

These views on grief, and more, will be discussed in this panel, presented by the Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP). Michigan Union, Pendleton Room, 530 S. State St., Ann Arbor.

1/20 – Performance: School of Music, Theater & Dance MLK Day Celebration, 2-3:30 p.m. Faculty and Students of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance offer performances that reflect the important legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as exemplified in the theme Power, Justice, Love: Heal the Divide, through music, word, and dance. Power Center, 121 Fletcher St., Ypsilanti.

1/16 – Poetry: "The Color of Drums: A Fork in the Road," Details TBA.

1/17 – MLK Day of Service, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Engage in service opportunities throughout the local Ypsilanti community. VISION Volunteer Center, 346 Student Center, 900 Oakwood St., Ypsilanti.

1/20 – President's Luncheon, 11:45 a.m. Features special address by Harlem Children's Zone founder, social activist and educator Geoffrey Canada. EMU Student Center Ballroom, 900 Oakwood St., Ypsilanti. \$20, \$10 for students. For more information, please contact Ron Reid at (734) 487-2282.

1/22 – Film / Panel Discussion, 6:30-8:30 p.m. EMU Student Center Auditorium, 900 Oakwood St., Ypsilanti. Details TBA.

January 28 – "Take a Chance Tuesday": live & free music at The Ark, 7:30-10 p.m. Food Gatherers benefit concert featuring famed NYC-based world music group, Matuto. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. Free; donations of nonperishable food items accepted. More info: www.theark.org, or call (734) 761-1451.

Peace Neighborhood Center: making our community better

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for each person who walks through its doors. Tracing the roots of this mission back to Rose Martin, he recalls her saying, "When I look into the eyes of each individual who walks through the door, I see greatness waiting to be nurtured."

Johnson also describes Peace as a place where all interactions are undertaken in a spirit of love and respect for individual dignity. When a school calls Peace to inform them that a certain student has had a bad day at school, staff wait outside for the bus and greet him or her with a warm hug and an invitation to talk about what had occurred. This is how Peace builds trust and fills the gap in the lives of the vulnerable.

School-Peace links are very strong. Guidance counselors, teachers, and even principals know they can count on the Peace staff and programs to nurture kids and effectively address individual needs. This is part of what Peace means by "wrap-around services." The links with families are equally consistent.

Participation of parents in Family Enrichment is mandatory when a child is enrolled in any youth program. Discussions include "the values-driven family," how to talk about sex with your child, and how to correct negative behavior. Participants must attend three or more monthly workshops. To facilitate

parental involvement, child care and a meal are available at each meeting. Sometimes, the activity is a special family outing, like a visit to a "you-pick" orchard, or to the theater in Detroit.

The nine youth services are a mainstay of Peace. Welcoming kids between grades one through high school, and sometimes beyond, they are a response to the needs of struggling families with two working parents and the disappearance of the neighborhood safety net. Billups explains that we can no longer count on parents and neighbors to keep a close eye on a kid's behavior.

In general, young people have a harder time nowadays, says Billups, because of the overwhelming presence of technology – mainly the internet, which grants access to unfiltered, often harmful information. Billups believes that electronic media "send kids the message that they should expect immediate gratification" in life. Parents, and society itself, "have lowered their standards," he says.

To counteract this, in the Peace vehicles there is neither radio nor any other source of music, and kids are not allowed to use electronic devices. On the other hand, the Peace vans and bus carry loads of books, and drivers start conversations on topics that catch the kids' attention and foster positive social

interactions. Not that the computing world doesn't have its rightful place; Peace is proud and grateful to have new computers for kids, exactly like the ones in the public schools. This recent acquisition was made possible by a foundation gift.

Young Peace participants enjoy a hot meal after school. Kids in kindergarten through fifth grade spend the afternoons in clubs (interest groups), free time, and tutoring (which is last but not least; timing is meant to give kids a break from academic work). Johnson says the kids love the clubs, which include art, singing, computers, step (dance), kitchen science, music, yoga and games.

For adolescents in grades 6 through 9, program offerings include Leadership Development Camp in the summer and Alternatives for Youth during the school year. Under that umbrella, Rising Sons is Peace's program for young men. Sessions deal with an array of topics, including sexuality and manhood, and the justice system. Paired mentoring, field trips, and just hanging out in comfortable environments provide many opportunities to be with an adult male model. A special program called Sisters Together Achieving Real Success (STARS) "is designed for girls in the 7th through 9th grades in order to help them develop into self-aware, healthy, and self-confident women," according to the website. Again, opportunities for consistent contact with adult models and a safe place to talk about personal concerns are key features.

Peace knows they cannot be "all things to all people," but they do come close. As Paul Johnson reminded me, they respect everyone, accept individuals "where they are," and do their best to function like one big wrap-around family.

Even for kids, getting where you need to be is essential for success in life and

not to be taken for granted. Peace provides transportation for young participants from their schools to the Center and then home. Often, an individual is given a ride to a special appointment, such as pre-college academic testing or a job interview. Programming Director Johnson took one young person off to college, flying with him all the way to Yuma, Arizona! For the young man in question, that trip came about because of his participation in Peace's College/Career Prep Club. This year-round program provides young people visits college and work-site visits, individual and group discussions, and practical help with scholarship and college admission applications. Actually, Peace never loses sight of these students during their higher learning years.

To say that Peace is a non-profit is to indulge in understatement. Their income and expenses match and come in under \$700,000. The (modestly) paid staff is fortunate to have six or more interns at any given time, drawn from area schools of education, social work and public health. There are scores of volunteers, and the Board of Directors – all volunteers – works hard to raise funds from foundations and individuals. As I witnessed on my visit, flexible staff members are willing to put their energy where it is most needed, regardless of their official titles.

Consider a mythical, small state with four districts and 200 voters in each district, for a total of 800 votes. As seen in the illustration below, Party A gerrymandered this state by packing Party B voters in District 4, and dividing voters in the other three districts to favor their own candidates. Even though Party B had 430 votes in this state to 370 for Party A, Party B would only get 1 representative (from District 4), while the outvoted Party A got three representatives (Districts 1, 2, and 3),

Majority rules – or does it? (Part One)

continued from page 5

that Republicans are better at this game, having figured out that by dominating state elections, they could manipulate the national outcome.

Almost all incumbent candidates who run for re-election win their seats. This is in part due to voters being creatures of habit. People don't like change. Also, an entrenched candidate has done favors around the district to create followers and has access to resources that facilitate communication with constituents. It is currently estimated that perhaps only 40 out of the 435 congressional seats have truly contested elections. This is partly caused by the fact that people tend to congregate with others whose similar circumstances nudge them toward similar political beliefs – and, increasingly, through the impact of gerrymandering. Once seated in Congress, a representative can look at his term in office as a sinecure serving for as long as he or she wishes. This can't be what our Founding Fathers intended.

Regardless of party, limited turnout in primaries by all but the most motivated and often most extreme voters pushes moderate candidates to take far-out positions or leads to them being deposited by more extreme primary opponents. Once in Congress, such politicians often continue to espouse and vote for extremist positions to ensure that they secure their party's nomination in the biased primaries that occur every two years for House seats.

How is gerrymandering carried out?
The most common procedure is called "packing," which involves concentrating voters thought to favor the opposition party in one or several districts to minimize their impact in other elections.

Here is a microcosm illustration:

District	Party A	Party B	District Total
1	110	90	200
2	114	86	200
3	105	94	200
4	40	120	200
Total Votes	370	430	800

even though Party B got 54 percent of the votes.

Another technique, called "cracking," is the inverse of packing. It is used to deny representation to a particular group. In this case, reapportionment disperses a particular group across many districts to deny them an opportunity to garner a majority of votes in one district. This is used to discriminate against minority groups and is subject to judicial scrutiny.

A non-partisan redistricting commission would know what to do with this straight forward guideline.

"First, determine whether it has an adverse impact on any political group, then whether it sets up districts lines that raise reasonable suspicions of being based on partisan considerations. If the answer is yes in both cases, then the state legislature would be asked to justify the lines drawn on other grounds. If it couldn't, the districting plan would be ruled a gerrymander."

This can even hurt the party that carries out most of the gerrymandering. In the most recent presidential election, on the road to his nomination, Governor Mitt Romney took more extremist positions than he had in the past. This was done to win the Republican primary. Once the nomination was secured, knowing that more moderates came out to vote in the actual election, he then sought to shift to more middle-of-the-road positions. This shifting was portrayed by Democrats as wishy-washy and disingenuous. Ultimately, it was thought to be an important factor in losing him the national election.

those who were gerrymandered into office.

So, necessary legislation on immigration, climate control, education, transportation, infrastructure and taxes gets tabled or defeated. The government is in gridlock. Unchecked, disproportional representation of the public's voting erodes the legitimacy of our democratic system.

Be sure to read the follow-up story on gerrymandering in the next month's edition of *Groundcover*. It will discuss the extent of gerrymandering here in Michigan and the steps that we can take to combat this offensive and dangerous imposition on our freedom.

Students recover U-M cafeteria food

continued from page 7

every day in the Mary Markley Dining Hall, packing leftover food into recyclable metal trays and placing them in coolers. They then transported the coolers to Food Gatherers, which already has distribution practices in place. After successfully recovering the food in Markley for the rest of the semester, they expanded to the West Quad Dining Hall. The operations there are even simpler. The employees actually handle the packing and freezing of the excess food, as they have available freezers. Volunteers just stop by and take the prepackaged food from the freezers and bring it to the Food Gatherers headquarters.

The expansion to West Quad has greatly increased their yield. Now the group recovers about 65 pounds of food daily, translating into about 50 meals, and they recently reached the 3,000-pound mark in total recovered food. These results have not gone unnoticed. All those involved are very grateful for the group's work. Gingerich claims, "the staff in Markley and Food Gatherers realize how much food we save and thank us on a daily basis." These results have encouraged further expansion. Gingrich has set her sights on expanding to

each of the 12 campus dining halls and perhaps local restaurants, afterwards.

These efforts by the more than 20 University of Michigan student volunteers are part of a larger network growing on campuses around the country. There are more than 40 campuses associated with the Food Recovery Network, along with an independent nonprofit organization – the Food Recovery Network – founded by the early members of the University of Maryland student group. On the nonprofit's website, www.foodrecoverynetwork.org, there are many resources for student groups interested in forming a food recovery group at their campus.

The success that the Food Recovery Network has achieved is certainly impressive. In less than one year, the group has gone from an idea to an organized group, effectively turning waste into food for thousands of food-insecure Washtenaw County residents. While the group predominantly attracts U-M students currently, any and all contributions of time and ideas from the public are welcomed. Contact Hannah Gingerich at hk.gingerich@umich.edu if you're interested in getting involved.



Bethlehem United Church of Christ
423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(between William and Packard)
www.bethlehem-ucc.org (734) 665-6149

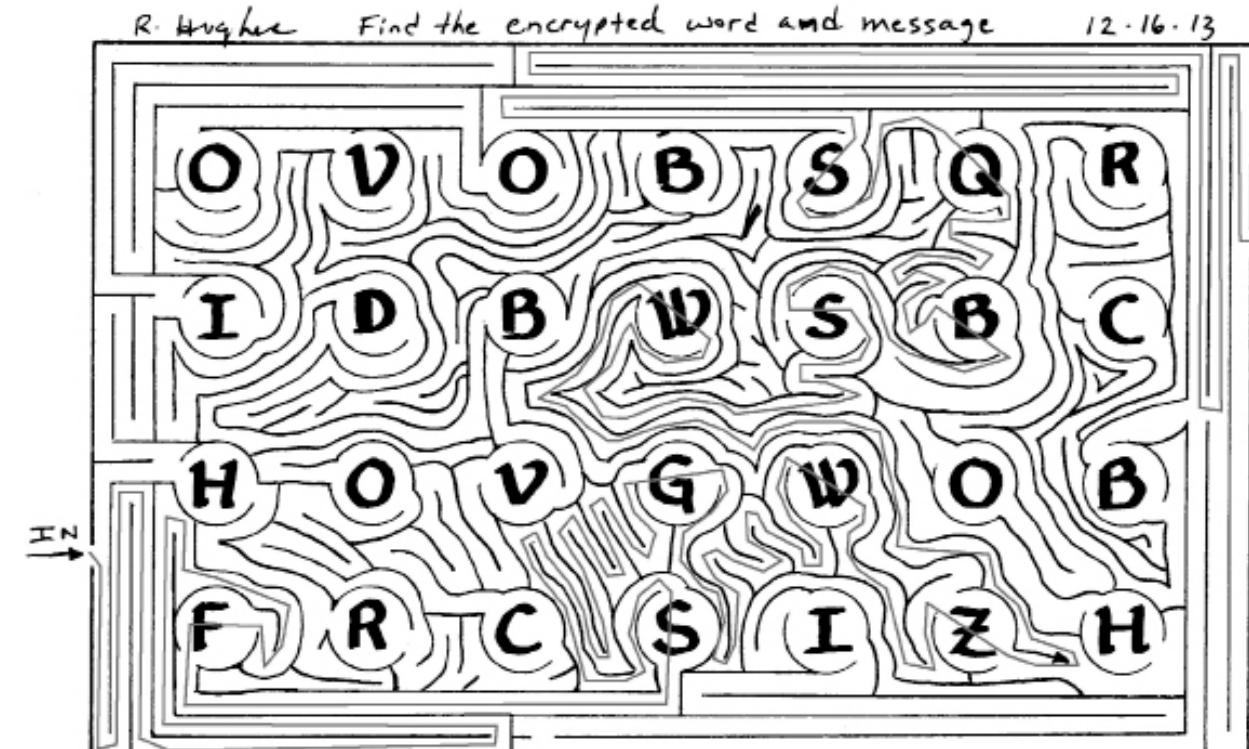
Bethlehem Church is home for the *Groundcover* Office

Sundays:
8:30 am and 10:00 am ~ Worship
10:00 am ~ Church School

Upcoming Events:
January 31st at 11:30AM Parking Lot Pretzel SALE

An invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy

3	5	6	4	8	7	2	9	1
9	7	2	1	3	6	5	4	8
1	8	4	9	2	5	3	6	7
5	6	1	3	9	8	7	2	4
8	3	7	2	5	4	6	1	9
4	2	9	7	6	1	8	3	5
7	1	5	6	4	2	9	8	3
2	4	3	8	7	9	1	5	6
6	9	8	5	1	3	4	7	2



The solution for the cryptograms is as follows:

Cryptogram word: RESILIENCE

Cryptogram message: A HAND UP NOT A HANDOUT

Oh my Gosh Goulash

by Lisa Sonnenburg
Groundcover Contributor

2 tbsp cooking oil

1 lb stewing beef

1 large carrot, chopped

2 large onions, chopped

2 tbsp paprika

¼ cup flour

1 tsp salt

½ tsp black pepper

¼ cup beef stock

¼ cup ketchup

¼ cup tomato juice

½ cup red wine



1. Heat the oil in a deep skillet or wide-bottom pan on medium heat.
2. Brown the stewing beef on all sides.
3. Remove the beef from the pan and set aside.

4. Add onions to the pan and cook until soft.
5. Return beef to pan and add carrots.
6. When the beef and vegetables are browned, add paprika, coating the meat and vegetables well.
7. Add the flour and coat the beef and vegetables.
8. Add salt, pepper, stock, ketchup, juice and wine.
9. Cook until tender (2-3 hours).
10. Serve with noodles, dumplings, or bread.

A hearty Hungarian stew for those cold winter months!



Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Gy Klone © 2014



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10 X 14

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